

Remarks to the Board of Regents

September 14, 1994 - 9:00 a.m.

Good morning. It is a pleasure to be here with you this morning. Many of you are familiar faces and some of you I'm meeting for the first time; however, I hope that over the next few months, I will come to know each of you and that ours will be a long and productive relationship for the state of Georgia as well as for Georgia Tech.

I appreciate this opportunity to address you today, and I want to express my gratitude to Chancellor Portch and the Presidential Search Committee, particularly Regent Dwight Evans, who served as chair of the committee, and Regents Juanita Baranco, Elsie Hand, Joel Cowan, and Bill Turner. I was impressed with the thoroughness of their search and their dedication to serving the University System's best interests.

For those of you who were not involved in the efforts of the search committee and may not already be familiar with my professional life, I would like to take just a minute to introduce myself. As most of you know, I come to you from the University of Washington where I most recently served as provost and vice president for Academic Affairs. However, my career in higher education began at Georgia Tech with a bachelor's and master's degree in civil engineering. I received my doctorate from the University of California in Berkeley in 1969. I have taught at Duke, Stanford, and Virginia Tech. In addition to my work at Washington, I have performed administrative duties at Virginia Tech as head of the Department of Civil Engineering for seven years and as dean of the College of Engineering for three years.

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Besides working in academia, I have worked for the Corps of Engineers and served as a consultant with numerous governmental agencies, private firms, and municipalities. Rather than bore you with the details of a civil engineer's life...as exciting as it may seem...let me say that I see my career as coming full circle, and that I am thrilled to be back in Georgia. I am excited about Georgia Tech's future and honored to have the opportunity to usher the Institute into the next century.

With only 13 days as Tech's president behind me, I can say that I am even more impressed with the faculty, staff, students, and friends of Tech than I was when I applied for the job.

High on my agenda at Georgia Tech: the engineering of a strategic plan; the building of bridges of communication to the faculty, students and the community; and creating an atmosphere that fosters teamwork .

Several weeks ago, I attended a retreat held by Chancellor Portch for the presidents of the universities and colleges in the University System to discuss strategic planning.

Strategic planning has been underway at Georgia Tech for sometime, but it has not been brought together in a common document. It now needs to be linked with an overview as to what the role and future of our institution is within the state of Georgia. Connecting Georgia Tech's plan to that of the Board of Regents is critical. The opportunity presented by Dr. Portch is one we will take advantage of.

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My style will be to have considerable communication across our organization. We want to build trust in our relationships so people can rely on each other. If you don't build communication and trust, you don't have teamwork. In these times of constrained resources, we will have to work together if we want to get the job done.

As I survey Georgia Tech, I see that its strengths are abundant. The outstanding quality of the students, an alumni that is unparalleled in their commitment, a rigorous curriculum designed to prepare leaders for the next century, a campus ready to host the Olympic Village, and a technological mission designed to provide public and private service make Georgia Tech well positioned to become a premier technological institute in the 21st century.

The research at Georgia Tech is uniquely interdisciplinary and spans the continuum from basic to applied and is creative, rigorous, and productive for Georgia's economy. We are becoming a technological university of the first rank by virtue of our core values, values we've had for over 100 years---hard work, the application of knowledge to meeting the needs of society, and a spirit of entrepreneurship.

As I conclude my remarks and welcome any questions you may have, I would like to assure all of you that I am committed to enhancing the value of a Georgia Tech degree. By maintaining high academic standards, advancing this state's importance to the rest of the nation's economy, and continuing the legacy of hard work and leadership that has become synonymous with Georgia Tech, we can build a future that will secure our place in an ever changing technological world.

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Once again I would like to thank the Search Committee, Chancellor Portch, and all of you for your support and partnership in the advancement of Georgia Tech's future. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today, and I look forward to working with you and learning more about each of you in the months and years to come.